WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   A network device management system comprising:

a storage facility for storing configuration knowledge instances and configuration data instances for a plurality of network devices; and

an assembler in communication with the storage facility, the assembler being capable of accessing the configuration knowledge instances and configuration data instances and assembling a device configuration from a selected one or more configuration knowledge instances and one or more configuration data instances.

2.   The network device management system of claim 1, wherein each configuration knowledge instance comprises at least one configuration knowledge schemata defining one or more capabilities of a network device.

3.   The network device management system of claim 2 further including a data entry facility for creating, modifying, and deleting said configuration knowledge instances and said configuration data instances.

4.   The network device management system of claim 1, wherein the storage facility comprises a central storage device.

5.   The network device management system of claim 1, wherein the storage facility comprises a distributed network of storage devices.

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6.   The network device management system of claim 1, wherein the assembler comprises a management application.

7.   The network device management system of claim 6, wherein the management application is configured to execute one or more functionalities selected from the group consisting of searching for assets, accounting for assets, versioning of asset information, editing of asset information, and updating of asset information.

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8.   A network data construct for use in a network device management system, the network data construct comprising:

a plurality of configuration knowledge instances, and

a plurality of configuration data instances.

9.   The network data construct of claim 8, wherein each configuration knowledge instance comprises at least one configuration knowledge schemata.

10.   The network data construct of claim 8, wherein each configuration knowledge instance comprises a plurality of layers selected from a group consisting of a device family layer, a device layer, a physical layer, and a logical layer.

11.   The network data construct of claim 8, wherein the configuration knowledge instances are organized using object classes.

12.   The network data construct of claim 8, wherein the configuration knowledge instances are organized using directories.

13.   The network data construct of claim 8, wherein the configuration knowledge instances are organized using inheritance properties.